DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 343 192 CS 507 782

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TITLE Intercultural Training through Global Education: An Alternative to Media Images of Africa.
PUB DATE Oct 91
NOTE 38p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (77th, Atlanta, GA, October 31-November 3, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cultural Images; Foreign Countries; Global Approach; Grade 6; Intermediate Grades; *Multicultural Education
IDENTIFIERS *Africa; California (South); *Global Education

ABSTRACT

Growing out of the belief that children need to acquire tools that will help them understand and interact with people from different cultures, a study examined the effect of a global education unit about Africa on the images of Africa held by sixth grade students, specifically investigating whether such instruction would reduce existing stereotypes and enhance children's general knowledge of Africa. Subjects were 51 fifth- and sixth-grade students at two elementary schools in southern California. A pretest, two cultural assignments, and a posttest were administered to the test and control groups over a 4.5 month period. The test classroom received a cultural unit on Africa at the beginning of the research study. Results showed that students' perceptions of Africa became less stereotypical, more diverse, and more positive, partially as a result of the cultural unit on Africa. Results also showed that cultural assignments illustrated a gradual change in children's images of Africa formed over the same period. (Two figures and three tables of data are included; 35 references are attached.) (SR)

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Intercultural Training Through Global Education: An Alternative to Media Images of Africa

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SCA International & Intercultural Communication Division

Speech Communication Association Conference

Atlanta, Georgia

October 31-November 3, 1991

AS507782

*The data referred to in this paper come from a larger set of data used in a master's thesis completed at San Diego State University under the direction of Dr. Larry Samovar and Dr. Janis Andersen.

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ABSTRACT

This study developed from the belief that children need to acquire tools that will help them understand and interact with people from different cultures. It is argued that without more accurate and diverse information about the world, American students will be less able to interact effectively and sensitively with culturally different peoples. Intercultural training for young people in the form of global education helps answer this need for competent intercultural communicators. The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of a global education unit on Africa on the images of Africa held by sixth grade students. More specifically, this study sought to determine whether such instruction would reduce existing stereotypes and enhance children's general knowledge of Africa.

Subjects for this study consisted of 51 fifth and sixth grade students at two elementary schools in Southern California. A pre test, two cultural assignments, and a post test were administered to the test and control groups over a 4-1/2 month period. The test classroom received a cultural unit on Africa at the beginning of the research study. It was found that students' perceptions of Africa became less stereotypical, more diverse, and more positive partially as a result of a cultural unit on Africa. It was also found that cultural assignments did illustrate a gradual change in the subjects' images of Africa formed over a 4-1/2 month period.

I look forward to the time when men will be as ashamed of being disloyal to humanity as they are now of being disloyal to their country.

Fyodor Dostoyevski

Intercultural Training Through Global Education: An Alternative to Media Images of Africa

INTRODUCTION

In the 1970s a movement to internationalize secondary and elementary curricula throughout the United States began in response to increasing intercultural awareness and contact among the world's people. This movement was called "global education." The goal of global education today is to promote the development of a global perspective in children throughout their twelve years of formal instruction (C. C. Anderson, 1982; Becker, 1982). Educators now seem to agree that preparation for citizenship in a world society has become imperative. "Education mirrors society and the society it mirrors in contemporary times is world society" (L. F. Anderson, 1982, p. 166). Intercultural training for young people through global education helps answer this call for an informed and interculturally competent international citizenry.

While schools and the family supply some of the information about other countries and cultures, the most common form of information Americans receive about other cultures is through media images (Gumpert & Cathcart, 1982), images that by their very nature are only representations of the world. Lippmann's (1922) identification of stereotypes as "habits of thought" led him to advocate that schools must teach children to be critical of media sources and recognize their often stereotypical portrayals of foreign cultures (Seiter, 1986). But Lippmann also hinted at the need for global education:

> The preparation of characters for all the situations in which men may find themselves is one function of a moral education. Clearly then, it depends for its success upon the sincerity and knowledge with which the environment has been explored. For in a world falsely conceived, our own characters are falsely conceived, and we misbehave. (p. 179)

These situations that Lippmann spoke of include the countless intercultural interactions that characterize international relationships between governments and people throughout the world today. Preparation for such situations cannot derive solely from media representations of the world environment because such images are often "falsely conceived." Offering children knowledge about diverse cultures and nurturing in them a global perspective are some of the most useful instruments for preparing individuals for intercultural interactions and for cultivating a loyalty to the larger body of humanity.

This study is based on the argument that without more accurate and diverse information about the world, U.S. students will be less able to interact effectively and sensitively with culturally different peoples. In their textbook, Teaching Oral Communication In Elementary Schools, Willbrand and Rieke (1983) specify that children should have the following two skills in order to effectively communicate interculturally: 1) recognize and discuss the essential characteristics of their own culture and 2) demonstrate both a sensitivity to and knowledge of other cultures. Hence, information about other cultures is a basic necessity -- for children and adults -- if one is to successfully communicate with individuals from other cultures.

The need for more directive and purposeful classroom instruction in the world's cultures has been expressed by

numerous scholars (L. F. Anderson, 1982; Becker, 1979; Kniep, 1982; Kohls, 1981; Latture, 1969; Tonkin & Edwards, 1981). Unfortunately, there has been very little research conducted regarding the development of knowledge and attitudes through global education and the effects such information has on students' global awareness (Torney-Purta, nd). The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of a global education unit on Africa on the images of Africa held by sixth grade students. More specifically, this study sought to determine whether such instruction would reduce existing stereotypes and enhance children's general knowledge of Africa. This study begins with a review of relevant literature. Second, the methodology for the study is explained. Third, a discussion of the results is offered. And finally, conclusions of the study are stated.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Media Stereotypes and Interaction

The notion that stereotypes affect interaction has been stated by several researchers in both communication and social psychology (Brislin, 1981; Hewstone & Giles, 1986; Samovar, Porter, & Jain, 1981; Taylor, 1981; Taylor & Moghaddam, 1987). Although stereotypes are not inherently negative and serve as useful tools for making sense of our world (Barna, 1988; Gumpert & Carthcart, 1982; Lippmann, 1922), "Our propensity for stereotyping is perhaps one of the most serious problems in intercultural communication" (Samovar, Porter, & Jain, 1981, p. 199). The media serve as a powerful and omnipresent source of cultural stereotypes (Gumpert & Cathcart, 1982; Lippmann, 1922),

and it is usually the media that give us our first glimpses of other cultures. Gumpert and Cathcart (1982) have developed a model that describes the media's influence on interpersonal interactions between culturally different peoples.

Based on Heider's Balance Theory (1945), which describes interaction as a constant attempt to maintain attitudinal symmetry, Gumpert and Cathcart's (1982) "intermedia" model integrates the variable of media stereotypes into this struggle for balance in interaction. They hold that stereotypes are a basic and necessary function of human thought and that without the mass media, stereotypes (categorized information) of other cultures would not be transmitted.

Gumpert and Cathcart (1982) believe that people subconsciously attempt to maintain symmetrical images of a culture, images that become stereotypes of a given culture. These stereotypes shaped by the media may ultimately affect intercultural interaction and conversely, interaction may have an affect on the stereotypes formed by the media. Figure 1 (see Appendix A) illustrates how media images "get in the way" of intercultural communication. A and B represent individuals from the same culture (the United States), O represents the foreign interactant (Africa), and M represents the media. The solid lines indicate direct interaction between A, B, and O while the dotted lines show the effect that the media have on the perceptions of different cultures held by each interactant. When A and O interact, M is an intermediating variable that will help shape their interaction (A-O-[M]). Although O may be dressed in a three-piece suit and speak flawless English, A may use the

media stereotype of Africans as primitive and uneducated in her assessment of O.

To maintain a symmetrical image of Africa as primitive and uneducated even when confronted face-to-face with disconfirming evidence, A may be convinced that either O is a "special case" and continue believing that most Africans are primitive, or A may look for evidence in O's behavior that confirms the media-shaped preconceived notions of Africans. A third outcome of this interaction could be A using experience with O to reformulate her stereotype of Africans. A's new image of Africa may result in a shifting of the primitive African image to a new state of symmetry that is more broad and realistic.

Because the media have such a profound influence over the images that we shape of foreigners, Gumpert and Cathcart (1982) suggest that we become more "media literate" in order to understand and control the power media sources have over the quality and effectiveness of our intercultural interactions. This study offers a second alternative to controlling the impact of media stereotypes on intercultural interaction: education. Teaching children the concept of culture as a framework for intercultural learning can help break some of the stereotypical thinking children often use when formulating pictures of other cultures and nations (Torney, 1979). The intermedia model illustrates the tremendous influence that media stereotypes of Africa have on intercultural interaction. This study sought to show that when children are taught that Africa is much more than the backward continent the media have exposed them to, their stereotypes of Africa change from predominantly negative

symmetrical images to images that form a more positive subconscious symmetrical state. When the variable of education (E) is added to the intermedia model, the tendency to stereotype other cultures is lessened because more accurate and diverse information has been made available than that provided solely by the media (see Figure 2, Appendix A). As a result, it is argued that culture learning prepares children for more successful and rewarding intercultural interactions.

Media Stereotypes of Africa

Overall awareness in the United States of African peoples and how they live is minimal. "Africa, for some Americans, is one vast exotic place, perhaps a single gigantic country, where wild animals roam and where the people cannot resist killing and perhaps even eating each other" (Unger, 1978, p. 20). Media depictions of Africa have been narrowly and largely negatively portrayed. In order for the early European explorers of Africa to legitimize their own civilized culture, potent African images of cannibals and savages were created (Stam & Spence, 1983). Today, media images of Africa may be seen in the "Tarzan" genre first created by Edgar Burroughs's novels and films, and in national magazines giving extensive coverage to the turmoil in African countries such as Ethiopia and South Africa.

Although probably the most popular and potent mediated images of Africa can be traced to the Tarzan genre created by Burroughs's novels and movies (Nesteby, 1982; Opubur & Ogunbi, 1978), they have not been the only distorted images of Africa portrayed in Western media. Burroughs was certainly not the

first Westerner to write about Africa. The first European explorers of what was to be termed the "dark continent" saw African culture as the antithesis of European culture and set out to construct a self-image for Europeans as refined and civilized by creating the "savage" and "cannibal" images of the African (Stam & Spence, 1983). If the black man is primitive and base, they argued, then the white man must surely be advanced and genteel. In addition, through writings and illustrations sent home from Africa, European explorers had to make the African inferior to themselves because "it was wrong to invade and dispossess your equals" (Davidson, 1984, p. 16). The distorted images of Africans on the Old World maps, in the early editions of the Illustrated News of London, and in the writings of explorers, missionaries and travellers, created more than elaborate myths of the African continent. By creating images of the African as untamed, lawless, and savage, these media also created a rationale for conquering and oppressing the people of Africa.

More modern media forms have helped sustain this Western notion of superiority over Africa. Stam & Spence (1983) describe television and cinema as magic carpets that take us around the world and help affirm "our [Westerners'] sense of power while making the inhabitants of the Third World objects of spectacle for the First World's voyeuristic gaze" (p. 4). Nesteby (1982) concurs by stating, "Africa was used to construct a fantasy world in which film audiences could adventurously play out formulaic rituals and tensions over and over again to reaffirm the Anglo superiority complex" (p. 115).

Most Americans have the same image of Africa that Richard Maynard described in his How Dark is a Dark Continent: Myths about Tropical Africa Created by Motion Pictures (1971): "I grew up, as did most of us, with the picture in my mind of Africa as some far, off, hot jungle teeming with ferocious animals and inhabited by savage black warriors" (p. 139). He asks his high school students each year what words come to mind when they think of Africa: jungle, savage, spear, dark continent, Tarzan and lions are the common responses. With the use of films, Maynard attempted to construct the reality and destroy the myths of Africa for his students. He identified three common themes prevalent in Hollywood films that had their beginnings centuries ago with the classical writings on Africa of Diodorun Sciculus and explorer Malfante in 1447. The myths of the "great white hunter," the "savage environment," and the "white man's burden" are represented in pictures such as Trader Horn (1930), The Naked Prey (1965) and Four Feathers (1939). Maynard showed his students the "real" Africa through films such as African Village Life (1967) and Africa: The Hidden Frontiers (1966). These films portray narratives sympathetic to the African perspective instead of the typical Western or colonial view.

Bohannan (1964) comprised a similar list of African myths created through the media: the lion in the jungle, the dark continent, "savage Africa", and the all-Black Africa. Referring to the first explorations of Africa, Bohannan explained that "because informed people were rare, and because those who did exist did not pool their knowledge, Americans and other Westerners became aware and conscious of Africa with all the

myths intact" (p. 4). Largely due to an extreme dearth of available first-hand knowledge, Americans and Europeans have continued to turn to the "myth makers", the Western media, for information about Africa.

The present study has isolated three themes prevalent in both past and present Western media. The Africa as primitive theme is most notably depicted in what Nesteby (1982) has called the "jungle film genre" created in Hollywood. The Tarzan film series has been the most potent representative of this stereotype and has paved the way for countless imitators. The second media stereotype of Africa isolated in this study is that of Africa as untamed. Africa is often portrayed as a place teeming with cannibals and headhunters, overrun by wild animals, and existing in a state of general lawlessness. A third common theme of Africa found in Western media is Africa as tragic. This stereotype has been more recently seen in the newspaper and magazine coverage of Ethiopia and South Africa in the last ten years, vast coverage that has depicted Africa as a continent unable to feed or govern its people. These themes will later be compared to those images of Africa held by the children who served as subjects for this study.

Global Education

The primary goal of global education is to help students develop a global perspective (C. C. Anderson, 1982; Hanvey, 1982). Such a perspective includes developing cross-cultural awareness, realizing that one's perspective is not universally shared, and understanding current world conditions and

developments (Hanvey, 1982). Global education also refers to efforts to cultivate in young people a perspective of the world which emphasizes the interconnections among cultures, species, and the planet. The necessary features of a global education program should include among others: global interdependence, cultural diversity, perspective consciousness, empathy, multiple loyalties, human rights, participation, and change (Falkenstein, 1983).

Global educators stress the need to globalize the entire curriculum so that different global education concepts are taught and emphasized across all disciplines. The most common social studies curriculum structure found in schools includes the method that teaches children large quantities of facts about other nations (Torney, 1979). Most social science courses concern themelves primarily with teaching students about rivers, crops, deserts and other physical characteristics, without giving students the tools to understand and accept other peoples (Latture, 1969). The need for a globalized curriculum is obvious when we understand that the mass media, especially television and newspapers, play an important role in children's international learning (Remy, Nathan, Becker, & Torney, 1975). For example, in a study of American children's images of foreigners, Lambert & Klineberg (1967) found that children age fourteen clearly chose Russia and Africa as the first and second least favored "nationalities" they would most like to be. This same age group reported the greatest dependency on television and reading material as their primary source of information of other cultures (Lambert & Klineberg, 1967).

The global educator plays a crucial role in fostering an intrinsic motivation in his/her students to learn about the world once outside the classroom walls. Such teachers know that global and cultural understanding must start at a young age and that a limited vision of the world will only prevent their students from participating productively in world society (Rosengren, Wiley, & Wiley, 1983). One specific goal in global education includes breaking down existing cultural stereotypes and presenting more accurate pictures of the world than the limited representations on television: "Teaching children about the world means building images of real people living in a real country who are like themselves in many ways and different in others" (Latture, 1969, p. 8). This study was designed to address this specific goal of global education. Two research questions were posed to guide the study: (1) Does a global education unit on Africa alter children's images of Africa and Africans? and (2) Do subsequent cultural assignments chart the progress of changing stereotypes that children have of Africa?

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Subjects for this study were 51 fifth and sixth grade students from two elementary schools in the Chula Vista School District, Chula Vista, CA, a suburb of San Diego. The test group consisted of one classroom of 25 sixth grade students from a neighborhood of predominantly lower middle-class families. The control group consisted of one classroom of 16 sixth grade and 10 fifth grade students from a neighborhood of predominantly middle-

class families. The test group classroom included 36% Hispanic, 28% Anglo, 28% Filipino, and 8% Vietnamese students while the control group classroom was comprised of 50% Hispanic, 42% Anglo, and 8% Filipino students.

Procedure

Three sets of data were collected from each of the two groups of subjects: (1) Pre test data, (2) Assignment #1, and (3) Post test data. Data collection began Nov. 7, 1989 and ended 4-1/2 months later on March 20, 1990. In order to assess the images held of Africa by the subjects, a pre test was administered to both the test and control groups. The following four open-ended questions were asked orally and students were instructed to write down their answers:

(1) What is the first thing you think of when you hear the word "Africa"?

(2) What do you think Africa is like?

(3) What do you think African people are like?

(4) Where do you think you got this information about Africa?

The fourth question was subsequently dropped in the coding and analysis of the pre test. It was determined that the students' answers were too vague and arbitrary to be of any use in this study.

Having completed the pre test, the test group was then given a three-hour unit on Africa, specifically on Kenya and the Maasai culture, over a three-day period by the researcher. Concepts emphasized during this unit were African cultural

diversity, traditional vs. modern customs, similarity to the United States, cultural differences, national vs. tribal governments, and the Kiswahili language. The control group did not receive any part of the cultural unit.

The information included in the cultural unit was based on some of the basic goals in global education. Cultural diversity, perspective consciousness, cultural change, and likenesses and differences of the world's cultures are among the primary concepts that global educators advocate children be taught. In addition, the country of Kenya and the Maasai and Kikuyu cultures were chosen as the focus African cultural groups because the primary researcher served for two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Kenya. Having lived in a community where Maasai and Kikuyu peoples make their homes, the primary researcher used her experiences and knowledge to devise the cultural unit administered to the test group.

Subjects in both groups completed two cultural assignments on Africa. The first assignment (stories on Africa) charted the progress of subjects' changing perceptions of Africa and allowed subjects to continue learning about Africa. Subjects were instructed by research assistants to write a 2-3 paragraph story about Africa. These stories were completed approximately three months after the pre test was administered. The students were encouraged to be creative and to use whatever information they already held of Africa. They were not encouraged to look up information in a book.

The second cultural assignment administered by the research assistants consisted of research on a particular subject of

Africa of each student's choosing and a 2-3 minute oral presentation. A primary tenet of global education is to provide students with ongoing opportunities to learn about the world. Thus the goals behind this assignment were to continue culture learning in both classrooms and to give students an opportunity to research and speak about something personally interesting to them on the subject of Africa. Students were instructed to "research" a topic on Africa and then deliver their speeches on Africa to their classmates. These speeches were prepared and delivered approximately one month after the stories on Africa were written. Although not encouraged to do so, the majority of students delivered the speeches verbatim from books on Africa provided by the researcher. The speeches, therefore, were not coded because they reflected students' research, not their own perceptions of Africa.

Eleven days after the subjects' speeches were completed, a post test was administered orally by the research assistants to both the control and test groups using the same pre test questions. As in the pre test, the fourth question was subsequently dropped in the coding and analysis of the data because it was felt that question four was too vague and arbitrarily answered by subjects.

Coding

The same coding scheme was used to categorize subject responses on the pre test and post test and the first cultural assignment. The basic tenet of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) calls for appropriate categories to be formed from

the data collected. Hence, the ultimate goal of the categorization process was to isolate dominant images of Africa held by the subjects as represented in the three sets of data. A four-step coding scheme was used to separate each set of data into descriptive categories: (1) tabulation, (2) specific categories, (3) general categories, and (4) intercoder checking. The first three steps of this coding scheme generated increasingly broader categories by clustering similar images of Africa into general categories. The fourth step of this coding scheme, intercoder checking, consisted of an open discussion that allowed the two coders and the primary researcher to check the content of the categories formed by each individual coder.

Using the coding scheme detailed above, the pre test and post test responses and the stories on Africa were first categorized by each individual question. Then all three questions were coded together for each set of data. By combining all three questions, larger, more descriptive categories of African images were formed.

To determine whether the two coders were coding the data similarly, an intercoder reliability test was performed prior to coding the pre test data. Out of a total of 102 possible images, 67 were found to be shared by both coders, making a 66% reliability rate. Although this is not a high rate of intercoder reliability, both coders did formulate the exact same categories (animals, jungle, hot, dark, and poverty). The fact that precisely the same categories were formed without the benefit of the fourth level of coding is intriguing and a powerful indicant

that the two coders were coding the data with a similar set of criteria.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the data, both percentage comparisons and descriptive comparisons were used. The percentage comparisons allowed for a more precise analysis to be applied to the data. Only those categories that contained at least 5% of a group's answers were used for comparison. Because of the demographic differences between the two subject groups and the small subject sample, tests of statistical significance were not appropriate methods to use in this study. The descriptive comparisons allowed for more vivid and graphic comparisons that illustrated rather than simply stated subject responses. Actual student answers were analyzed as a means to determine which specific images of Africa were reported by subjects and how such images changed over the 4-1/2 month time span.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One

Research question one asked whether a cultural education unit on Africa alters children's images of Africa and Africans. Results showed that some considerable changes occurred in the test group between administration of the pre test and post test. The test group reported "animals," "hot," "destitution," and "jungle" as their initial impressions of Africa on question one of the pre test. On the post test, however, there were no responses of "destitution", with "animals," "jungle," and "geography" comprising the three major categories for question

one (see Table 1). Africa as a place of poverty and starvation was no longer one of the first images of Africa that subjects reported, with geographical locations such as Kenya and Egypt replacing prior initial responses of "hungry people" and "poor black people." "Animals," however, continued to be the dominant image in both the pre and post tests, making up 44% of the responses on both tests. Africa as an untamed land roaming with wild animals is perhaps too strong an image for twelve year-olds to be altered.

The control group showed less change on question one over the 4-1/2 month period between the pre and post tests. Their three initial images of Africa, "animals," "a place," and "people," reported on the pre test stayed roughly the same on the post test (see Table 1).

When the responses to all three questions were combined and coded, it was obvious that considerable change had occurred in the test group over the 4-1/2 month period. The test group responded on the pre test with "destitution" and "animals" as the primary images of Africa, making up almost 19% and 17% of the total number of responses respectively. On the post test, however, "destitution" ranked as the eighth most common response and "animals" as the third most common response. "Different ways" (25.33%) and "pleasant" (23.55%) became the dominant images of Africa reported by test subjects on the post test (see Table 2).

Specific test subject responses illustrate the changing images that took place between the pre and post tests. One test group student reported on the pre test, "I think the people are

poor, some of them don't have jobs, don't have medical care" (6T). This same student responded quite differently when asked to describe African people on the post test: "nice, friendly, and they talk differently than us." Another student wrote on the pre test that "many have died in Africa because they are very poor, smelly, they die fast, have no cars, houses, theaters, restaurants, food, clothing" (13T). On the post test this same subject described Africa as less homogeneous, poverty-stricken and primitive: "The people in Africa are like regular people but colored different. But not all of them are black, there are white people too. The people are also exciting in what they act like at their parties or ceremonies." One student described Africans as "dirty and some clothes and without shoes. They are poor" (5T) on the pre test. On the post test, however, this same student described Africans quite differently: "The people of Africa are the same as we are, they dress the same and act the same. They eat pizza, hamburgers and meat." This latter description of Africa as "like the United States" accounted for more than 6% of the total number of responses on the post test. Subjects made no mention, however, of this image on the pre test.

These changes depict an Africa that was formerly described as a poor, destitute continent to one that is viewed more positively, more diversely and even as similar to the United States. Diversity was a predominant image of Africa on the test group post test. This shift in the perception of Africa as a homogeneously populated continent where all or most of the people are poor and black may be traced in large part to the cultural unit on Africa administered to the test group. African cultural

diversity was a major concept introduced to the test group subjects and out of the 25 test group subjects, 10 of them mentioned the term "cultural diversity" on the post test. Three different tribes (Maasai, Akamba, Kikuyu) were introduced and their differences and similarities discussed as part of this unit. Both traditional and modern aspects of life were juxtaposed for students. This was accomplished through a slide show depicting, for example, the Maasai taking part in a traditional ceremony and simultaneously wearing western-style tennis shoes and sun glasses. In addition, Africa was made to look less strange to students by comparing the governmental and societal systems of the United States, Kenya, and the Maasai.

The changes in the test subjects' images of Africa cannot, however, be solely attributed to the cultural unit that the group received in November. Classroom instruction on Egypt and Mesopotamia and the students' own information gathered privately or during their speech research were other possible catalysts of change. In addition, any daily interplay between the teacher and students about Africa could have affected the changed images reported on the post test. But many of the same concepts incorporated in the African cultural unit were included in the test group's post test responses, images of Africa that were either not present at all or present to a lesser degree on the pre test.

Considerably less change occurred in the control group over the 4-1/2 month period when all three questions were combined and categories formed. "Animals," "destitution," and "hot" were the three most frequently mentioned images by the control subjects on

both the pre and the post tests, although "destitution" decreased by 7% (see Table 2). The dominant images from the control group's post test continued to greatly reflect some of the more stereotypical images of Africa held by children and depicted in the western media. Images of Africa as a place of animals, destitution, and black people -- images that are not false, just exaggerated -- still remained as "Africa" for the control subject group.

The test group's store of new knowledge, however, reflected one of the major objectives of global education, that of developing a sense of cross-cultural awareness about the world (Hanvey, 1982). They began to see Africa as a place of great cultural diversity where life is more than a struggle to survive. Latture (1969) emphasized the need to create images for children of real people living lives both similar and different from their own. The test group appeared to have retained an image of Africa as a real place where people live a variety of lives and behave in a number of different ways.

Research Question Two

The second research question in this study asked whether the cultural assignments completed by the test group charted the changing stereotypes of Africa held by the subjects. Given that "little is known about how stereotypes and other types of knowledge structures change over time" (Rose, 1981, p. 295), it is important to determine in what ways children's perceptions of Africa change over a 4-1/2 month period. Such charting may give insight into how effective ongoing culture learning is in altering stereotypical images that children hold of Africa. The

stories of Africa completed by the test subjects served as a mid-point "stereotype evaluation" between the pre and post test responses. A pattern of decreased stereotypical and negative images developed across all three sets of data. For example, the image of Africa as "destitute" decreased substantially in the test group from almost 19% on the pre test, to 3.5% on the stories, and then to approximately 6% on the post test. In addition, the category of "animals" decreased from 17% to 11.5% on the post test, with no category of "animals" formed from the images in the stories because of too few "animal" images present (see Table 3).

Some images increased substantially in the test group over the three sets of data. The image of Africa as a "pleasant" place decreased slightly from 3.36% on the pre test to 2.69% in the stories, but then increased more than 20% to 23.55% on the post test. Finally, Africa as a "different" place made up 15.55% of the total number of images on the pre test, then increased 30% on the stories to almost 46%, and finally fell to approximately 25% on the post test. These changes over the 4-1/2 month period indicate that perceptual transitions were taking place. The first cultural assignment charted either decreases in stereotypical images of Africa or increases in more positive images (see Table 3).

Specific responses that serve as representative examples of the test group subjects offer greater insight into these gradually changing perceptions of Africa. On the pre test, subject 2T described Africa as " . . . hot. People live in huts in Africa. Africa is very poor. . . They go around without no

clothes. They have dances." "Hot" was still the first image mentioned by this subject in his/her story but more specific information on Africa was given: "In Africa it is very hot. There are a lot of tribes. One of the tribes' names is Maasai. Africa has farms and red ants. The other tribe's name is Gikuyu. They also have ugali and irio. Africa is a very poor place." Finally, on the post test this same subject described Africa with very positive images: "I think Africa is hot but has a beautiful climate. . . African people are wonderful people. They like to talk to many of their tourists and entertain them. African people are very friendly and kind." Notice that "hot" remains the dominant image throughout all three sets of data. This stereotypical image of Africa is too potent for this subject to be altered by the cultural unit and subsequent assignments. But the images shift from almost entirely stereotypical on the pre test, to more diverse and specific in the stories, and finally to very positive, "pleasant" images on the post test.

A second test subject went through similar perceptual changes. On the pre test subject 11T described Africa in very few words as, "jungles . . . hot and noisy . . . black." This subject's initial information about Africa was sparse. More images emerged in the story three months later:

> Africa is a pretty interesting place. It's almost like our country but a little more different. . . They have different ceremonies . . . Their clothes are not the same as ours, neither is their jewelry . . . I guess it is pretty much fun in Africa, Kenya and all the different tribes.

This description contains far less stereotypical images than the few mentioned on the pre test. In addition, Africa had become

more vivid and concrete for this student, a place that was not so abstract and unfamiliar. Africa and its people are then described further by this subject on the post test as positive and similar to the U.S.:

> I think Africa would be a nice place to visit because of the people, villages, and the ceremonies . . . Pretty much like Americans but might be a little more funny. They also have different games, jobs and have ceremonies that we've never had before.

The pre test responses from this subject indicated a very limited knowledge of Africa and those images that were mentioned were narrow and highly stereotypical. The images in the story and on the post test, however, revealed both more information and more positive thoughts of Africa. Africa is described as both similar and different from the United States, images that are far more realistic than the original responses on the pre test of "jungles and black." A progression of images of greater diversity and positiveness took place over the course of 4-1/2 months. Africa became less alien, less culturally and climactically homogeneous, and more appealing as the images progressed from the pre test to the post test.

A final subject example helps to further illustrate the progression of changing perceptions of Africa over the course of the three data sets. Subject 13T described Africa on the pre test as, " . . . poor black people. . . a place where there are bugs and poor . . . many have died in Africa because they are very poor, smelly, they die fast." This description of Africa as a land of poverty and death where only black people live changes considerably in this same subject's description of Africa in the story that he/she wrote:

> Some people think that Africa is a very poor place. Or just black people. It is a continent with many countries there. But . . . Africa is a mix of people and some parts of it are rich and poor. It's a very pretty grassy place. I would like to visit it in real life.

Africa became less a place where poor black people live and more a continent of diversity where both rich and poor live in a variety of countries. These images continued on the post test when this same subject described Africa as, "pretty, fun, exciting, smelly, dry, and hot. Also nice looking and cultural diversity. The people in Africa are like regular people but colored different. But not all of them are black, there are white people too." Although the stereotypical and negative images of Africa as hot, dry and smelly are mentioned, the majority of the responses that this subject gave on the post test describe Africa as culturally diverse and overall, quite an agreeable place to live.

These processual changes can be accounted for by a number of factors: the cultural unit, the cultural assignments (both the stories and the speeches on Africa), other classroom instruction and activities, or the popular media. It is interesting to note, however, that those images that changed over time and the new images which formed were concepts stressed during the administration of the cultural unit. With the help of an African "perspectives box," which depicted people of all races on each side of the box, students in the test group were taught that not all of the people in Africa have black skin. African cultural diversity was a ccmmon image for many subjects that emerged across the three sets of data. In addition, it was stressed that

rich, poor, and middle class people alike live in Africa. Africa as only a land of poverty was an image that drastically changed from the pre test to the post test. The first cultural assignment illustrated these shifting perceptions taking place over the 4-1/2 month period. The stories offered subjects the opportunity to reveal these changes and articulate the new images of Africa that had formed.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY

This study has attempted to show that a cultural unit on a small part of Africa administered over a 4-1/2 month period does change -- at least temporarily -- the stereotypical images that children have of the African continent. The content of the cultural unit correlated highly with those images held by subjects on the stories and the post test. Given these findings, Gumpert and Cathcart's (1982) model of inter-mediated communication, which illustrates the profound impact that media stereotypes have on intercultural interaction, can therefore be modified to include the intervention of global education as a possible impacting variable on interaction. Brislin (1981) has stated that our tendency to stereotype whole groups of people is one of the two major effects on intercultural interaction. To counteract these "habits of thought," information about the world's cultures should be taught to children during their formative school years when perceptions and beliefs about other countries are developing. As a result, perhaps the narrow and often distorted picture of Africa that U.S. children receive from the media can be circumvented by more diverse, positive, and

realistic information about Africa. With a broader base of knowledge about African countries, interaction between Americans and Africans can proceed more effectively without the added baggage of potent, preconceived notions of Africa as a wild, alien land of despair.

A second conclusion reached in this study was that the first cultural assignment served as a record of the changing perceptions of Africa held by subjects over the 4-1/2 month period. By looking at the images detailed in the first cultural assignment, one can see how the images changed over time from the pre test to the post test. Beginning as largely stereotypical descriptions of Africa as tragic and untame on the pre test, the responses reflected more diverse and positive images on the first cultural assignment and on the post test. Although the time period was extremely brief, such assignments give some insight into how stereotypes change over time.

Finally, this research study has shown that relatively small amounts of information about Africa can considerably change the ways that children perceive Africa and Africans. If such change can take place with one short unit and over a brief period of time, the effects of several such units integrated into the entire elementary curriculum could have profound long term effects on children's perceptions of other cultures and nations. Integration of global education goals in all subjects and at every level of the curriculum is imperative to ensure that children become adequately prepared to take on their roles as world citizens.

SUMMARY

This study addressed the following question: How do we train individuals to take part productively in an interdependent world made up of vastly different cultures and nations? Informing young people about the world's cultures is one of the first steps. Popular media have traditionally provided Americans with the bulk of information about the world, information that is necessarily truncated yet unfortunately distorted. This study has revealed that a short global education unit on Kenya and the Maasai culture can counteract media stereotypes of Africa and enable students to develop new, more diverse and realistic images of the African continent. Preparation for intercultural interactions between the world's people must begin in part with this kind of training. If Brislin (1981) is correct when he states that the tendency to stereotype and use well-established categories are the two major effects on intercultural interaction, supplying children with more accurate and diverse information about whole cultures can only enhance their ability to communicate with the world. Not until we have acquired an accurate understanding of how cultures operate and view the world can we hope to talk sensibly with them.

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APPENDIX A

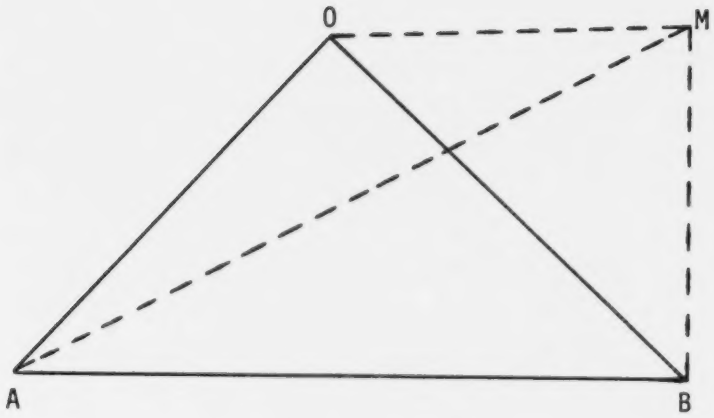

FIGURE 1

Model of Inter-mediated Communication*

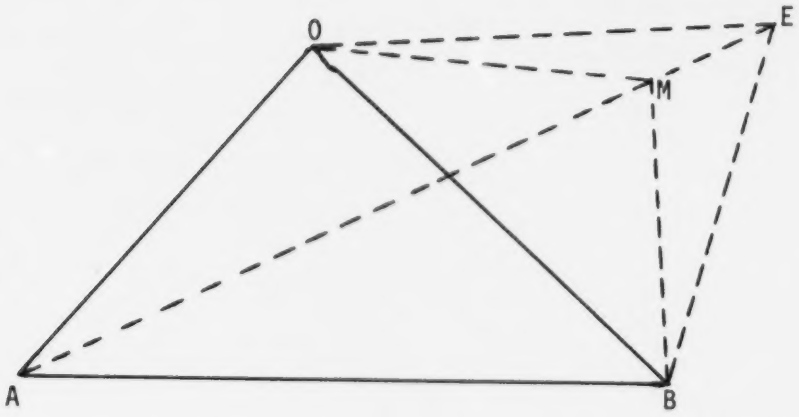

FIGURE 2

Modified Model of Inter-mediated Communication

*From Gumpert and Cathcart (1982).

TABLE 1

Pre-Post Comparison:
Initial Images of Africa

	S_s N = 25		S_s N = 26	
	TEST		CONTROL	
Category	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Animals	44.00	44.00	46.15	38.47
Jungle	12.00	16.00	3.85	3.85
Hot	20.00	8.00	0.00	19.23
Destitution	20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Geography/ A place/Land	0.00	16.00	19.23	23.08
People	0.00	0.00	11.54	11.54
Miscellaneous	4.00	16.00	19.23	3.85
Response N =	25	25	26	26

TABLE 2

Pre-Post Comparison:
Images of Africa

	Ss. N = 25		Ss. N = 26	
	TEST		CONTROL	
Category	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Pleasant	3.36	23.55	10.03	6.98
Destitution	18.90	5.77	18.45	11.63
Animals	17.23	11.55	11.65	15.89
Different (Ways/People)	15.55	25.33	6.80	10.46
Hot	11.76	6.22	11.33	14.73
Jungle	10.50	7.55	5.82	5.81
Bad	6.30	8.00	8.09	5.04
Dark	7.56	(3.11)*	4.85	10.07
Like U.S.	.00	6.22	0.00	0.00
Tragic	.00	.00	4.85	.00
Strong	.00	.00	4.85	.00
Africans	.00	.00	4.53	.00
Self-Sustaining	.00	.00	.00	5.04
Geography/ Societies	.00	.00	.00	6.98
Misc.	8.82	5.77	8.75	7.36
Response N =	238	225	309	258

*Response in parentheses indicate "dark" responses taken from "Different People" category on the post test.

TABLE 3

Pre-Stories-Post Comparison:
Images of Africa

S. N = 25

	TEST GROUP		
Category	Pre (11/7)	Stories (2/14)	Post (3/20)
Pleasant	3.36	2.69	23.55
Destitution	18.90	3.59	5.77
Animals	17.23	0.00	11.55
Different (ways, people, food)	15.55	45.74	25.33
Hot	11.76	4.93	6.22
Jungle	10.50	5.83	7.55
Bad	6.30	0.00	8.00
Dark	7.56	0.00	(3.11)*
Like U.S.	0.00	2.24	6.22
Geography	0.00	19.29	0.00
Wealth	0.00	4.93	0.00
Miscellaneous	8.82	10.76	5.77
Response N =	238	223	225

*Responses in parentheses indicate "dark" responses taken from "Different People" category on the post test.